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UNCLAS ABU DHABI 04225

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ACTION: ECON
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INFO RUEHZM/GULF COOPERATION COUNCIL COLLECTIVE
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SIPDIS

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E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [TBIO](#) [KSCA](#) [EAGR](#) [ECON](#) [PREL](#) [SOCI](#) [WHO](#) [FAO](#) [OIE](#)
SENV, TC
SUBJECT: UAEG PREPARES FOR AVIAN INFLUENZA

REF: A. STATE 181885
[B.](#) STATE 183738
[C.](#) STATE 182324
[D.](#) STATE 180478
[E.](#) STATE 175585

[11.](#) (U) Summary: Recently, the UAEG established a task force to devise a contingency plan to block avian influenza from entering the country. As such, the Agriculture and Fisheries Ministry has imposed a ban on the import of live birds and their products from countries where cases of the disease have been detected. The Ministry has also banned poultry from flu-infected countries unless an approved lab certifies it to be disease-free for fifteen days before imported. Subsequent to the plan's announcement, embassy nurses met with the Director of Infectious Disease, Dr. Farida Al Hosseini, to further discuss the UAEG's avian flu preparations. End Summary.

[12.](#) (U) The Environment Agency Abu Dhabi recently released a 35 million dirham (9.5 million USD) plan to combat bird flu. Under the plan, if poultry or any birds test positive for either high or low pathogenic avian influenza virus they will be destroyed immediately, including all contaminated feed, waste products and other potentially infectious material. The plan also provides that any chicken coops, equipment, containers, vehicles or other items that may have come in contact with the infected bird, will be disinfected. Furthermore, poultry workers, zoo staff, pet shop employees, veterinarians and breeding centers will also be screened for the disease. Sampling will also be conducted of suspected airport passengers showing symptoms of the bird flu. Environment Agency Secretary General, Majid Al-Mansouri, told Econchief that he was working on the UAEG's plans. He had originally been tasked with the program for the Emirate of Abu Dhabi, but the government expanded his agency's

responsibilities. Al-Mansouri will be meeting with a delegation on climate change so is unable to attend the October 6-7 high level meeting in Washington.

¶13. (U) On October 1, the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries held a seminar at the Abu Dhabi Food Control Authority regarding preventative measures for avian influenza. Saeed Mohammed Al Raqbani, Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries, said that the bird flu was a serious threat to human health. As such, the UAE has banned the import of birds from countries which are known to have the avian influenza.

¶14. (U) On October 4, embassy nurses met with the Director of Infectious Disease for the Preventive Medicine Clinic in Abu Dhabi, Dr. Farida Al Hosseini, to discuss avian flu preparations in the UAE. Dr. Hosseini stated that the UAEG originally requested 3,000,000 doses of Tamiflu, but reportedly increased its request to 100,000,000 doses. The supplier of the drug is expected to send less than the 3,000,000 doses originally requested in the next few weeks. The UAEG does not know whether it will receive the remainder of the Tamiflu requested.

¶15. (SBU) Dr. Al Hosseini told embassy nurses that the task force committee has not yet established any guidelines concerning who will receive the Tamiflu in the event of an outbreak. Dispensing protocol will be decided once the Tamiflu is received. One hospital in each UAE city will act as an isolation center in the event of an outbreak. These hospitals are being provided with protective equipment. Dr. Hosseini also stated that the Preventative Health Clinic has prepared educational pamphlets to hand out to the public if there is an outbreak in the country. At this point, the UAEG is not doing any outreach for fear of causing a panic. Furthermore, no official guidelines have been given to health care providers regarding treatment of the disease.

¶16. (SBU) There is currently no testing facility in the UAE to verify the presence of the bird flu. The UAEG requested help in setting up a lab, but according to Dr. Al Hosseini, that request was turned down by the WHO since no actual case of the bird flu has been found in the UAE. Dr. Al Hosseini stated that the task force is independently trying to set up a testing facility where the preliminary results would be known in twenty minutes.

¶17. (U) The UAE delegate to the IPAPI Senior Officials meeting October 7-8 will be the Director of Plant Quarantine at the Ministry of Agriculture, Mohammed Moussa Abdullah, date of birth: September 16, 1964; passport number: A1247998.

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